

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Responsible Agencies: U.S. Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Richland Operations Office (RL); U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Army (USDOA); U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Title of Proposed Project: Schultz-Hanford Area Transmission Line Project – DOE/EIS-0325

State Involved: Washington

Abstract: BPA proposes to construct a new 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line in central Washington. This project would increase transmission system capacity north of Hanford. Since the mid 1990's, transmission lines in central Washington have grown increasingly constrained. During spring and early summer months, the amount of power that needs to move through this area exceeds the carrying capacity of the existing transmission lines. Not having enough transmission capacity can compromise safety and decrease transmission system reliability. Four construction alternatives, all involving construction of new transmission lines, and a No Action alternative are being considered. Each construction alternative begins at BPA's Schultz Substation approximately 9 miles north of Ellensburg, Washington. The alternatives terminate in northern Benton County at one of two locations, BPA's Hanford Substation or a new substation (Wautoma Substation) just east of the Benton REA Blackrock Substation. The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2) is approximately 64 miles long. This alternative would terminate at the new Wautoma Substation. Most of the new line would parallel existing transmission lines with separation varying between 125 feet and 1375 feet. About 8 miles of the line would be a rebuild of the existing line to double-circuit to hold both the existing and new transmission line. This would reduce ROW impacts and the need for new access roads through agriculture. Alternative 1 is approximately 63 miles long and would terminate at Hanford Substation. This alternative would establish a new ROW in the vicinity of, but not directly adjacent to an existing ROW. There would be impacts to agricultural practices and rangeland. Alternative 3 is approximately 58 miles long and would terminate at the new Wautoma Substation. About 30 miles of the route would be a new ROW through the Yakima Training Center causing disruption to Army uses of land as well as impacts to shrub-steppe habitat and known cultural resource sites. Alternative 1A is approximately 70 miles long and ends at Hanford Substation. This alternative would establish about 14 miles of new ROW, with the remaining being in the vicinity of, but not directly adjacent to an existing ROW. There would be impacts to shrub-steppe habitat and rangeland. BPA is also considering a No Action Alternative (Environmentally Preferred). This alternative would not create any construction related environmental impacts and would not meet the purpose or need for the project.

The USDOA, BLM, BOR, and USFWS, as cooperating agencies, must select an alternative based on their needs and objectives, decide if the project complies with currently approved management plans/objectives, and decide if they would issue the appropriate permits/easements for the construction, operation, and maintenance of project facilities. The RL, while not a cooperating agency, would make joint decisions with BPA.

The comments received on the Draft EIS and responses to the comments are in Chapter 6.

The Final EIS looks much like the Draft EIS. Additions and changes are underlined. Deletions are not marked. Additional appendices have been added to respond to comments and clarify information. A listing of the general changes in each chapter is listed on the next page.

BPA expects to issue a Record of Decision (ROD) in February 2003. The ROD will be mailed to agencies, groups, and individuals on the mailing list.

For additional information, contact:

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For more copies of this document, please call 1-800-622-4520 and ask for the document by name. The Summary is also available on the Internet at www.efw.bpa.gov. Click on *Environmental Planning/Analysis*, *Active Projects*.

For additional information on DOE NEPA activities, please contact Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA oversight, EH-25, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington D.C. 20585, phone: 1-800-472-2756.